



## **Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board of Trustees**

Date: June 9, 2022  
Time: 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM  
Location: Conducted via remote participation

Attendees: Karen Kelleher, Beth Elliott, Jaclyn Pacejo, Neal Mongold, Eric Helmuth, Calpurnya Roberts

Absent: Phil Tedesco  
Staff: Kelly Lynema, Marisa Lau

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Introductions**

Karen welcomed Beth Elliott as the Town Manager's appointee to the Trust. Beth is deeply experienced in affordable housing through her work as an attorney and as a committed advocate. Kelly introduced Marisa Lau, Senior Planner, who will be helping with the Action Plan and outreach and engagement activities. The Trust members introduced themselves and described their background in affordable housing work.

Beth thanked Karen for the introduction and described her background. She was as a staff attorney and then general counsel at Mass Housing for ten years. Currently with The Community Builders, a nonprofit affordable housing developer in Boston that also works in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest, where she has gotten to see how places like NYC, Chicago, and New Haven approach affordable housing. She also supports TCB's Community Life Team, which works closely with residents on support services.

Karen noted the Trust is still recruiting for one open seat: a resident who lives in subsidized housing and also represents a housing organization in Arlington. Ideally the Trust would be at full membership before starting the community engagement process, and one of her priorities is to connect with housing organizations to get recommendations. Neal and Karen discussed conversations initiated so far with different organizations in town.

#### **2. Action Plan Working Group Update**

Karen provided an update on the Action Plan as was shared at Town Meeting on 6/8 to demonstrate the Trust's progress and invite Town Meeting Members (TMMs) into the engagement process that will be kicking off very soon. She went over new slides in the deck, showing their work to date and recapped where they were in the RFP process for a consultant to oversee the plan development. The Trust will undertake public outreach for the Action Plan, which Calpurnia will talk about next. She went over the goals and principals underlying the planning process, which included inclusion of underrepresented groups and building alignment of housing stakeholders. She also showed an updated slide that lists proposed strategies.

Calpurnia shared details of the Community Engagement Plan. As their goal is to be more inclusive and hear all voices, activities will be designed to reach out to those who are typically not engaged in the planning process. She went over the resident survey, which will be a short survey to get ideas around the need for affordable housing, populations the Trust should focus on, and how to motivate residents to be more engaged with the Trust. There will be both an online and a street intercept format; it will take fewer than 10 minutes to complete the survey.

Using the initial survey results, a set of questions for further elucidation at targeted listening sessions will be created. Sessions will be held for underrepresented groups most likely to need and benefit from affordable housing, including renters, young people, seniors, people of color and people with disabilities.

A public forum will be held to share the results of engagement activities with the community, and get their feedback. This forum will help the Trust be more responsive to the community. Karen added that they will also hold joint meetings of housing stakeholders that were discussed earlier. At Town Meeting, TMMs were invited to take the survey, share their ideas with the Trust, comment on the plan when finalized, and support funding of the Trust with sustainable long-term resources, increased ARPA funding, and other mechanisms such as approval for the real estate transfer tax currently before the state legislature.

#### **a. Action Plan update and schedule**

Karen provided more information on the response to the consultant RFP. This was the second time issuing the RFP, and a response was received from Bev Gallo from the Peregrine Group. Bev has deep affordable housing development experience as well as experience working with municipal groups, several of which gave her very strong references. She is responsive to what the Trust is looking for, and would be billing on an hourly basis. She also understood and was able to align with the schedule as proposed. Kelly added that the consultant's role will be to tie strategies to financial realities and perhaps help with educational tools so that residents can understand what it would take

financially to develop 100% affordable housing or how Arlington's inclusionary zoning works, for example. Additionally, the consultant would be able to focus on the nuts and bolts needed to work with developers and others on the technical side of creating/preserving affordable housing. Essentially, this amounts to filling in the strong framework created by the Trust and plugging in details.

Calpurnyia asked whether the consultant scope included writing the draft and when the contract would end. Karen clarified that the consultant would support the Trust's level of involvement in the writing and editing process (a first draft of the plan narrative has already been written, for example). The consultant would be engaged through the end of the planning period, scheduled for October.

Neal asked if technical support would be provided by the consultant for the public events. Karen confirmed that was included in the scope, and discussed the importance of the consultant hearing what the Trust is hearing in the community. Calpurnyia added that for the small group sessions, attendance by additional members or staff should be limited as it can affect participants' ability to share their thoughts freely. Kelly noted that DPCD consultants had recently held a listening session for another project without staff present. Participants seemed to appreciate being able to provide feedback directly to the professionals in charge of drafting the plan and designing the improvements.

Karen made a motion to move forward with Bev's proposal provided that it meets all the Trust's requirements and her references are acceptable; Jaclyn seconded. The Trust voted to accept the proposal (5-0 with one absent).

## **b. Community Engagement Plan**

Calpurnyia shared the draft survey with the Trust and asked for feedback on several items. The first question asked if the respondent is a resident. The group discussed variations of this question and placement in the survey. Karen, Neal and Jaclyn commented that replies of both residents and non-residents have value, but respondents' relationship or connection with Arlington should be captured as well in order to be able to be factored into the data analysis.

There was lengthy discussion about the questions related to support for affordable housing, populations to prioritize for affordable housing (i.e. by income level, etc.), and strategies to fulfill the Trust's mission. Members made suggestions to clarify questions, responses, and use non-technical language. Calpurnyia incorporated these and asked that further feedback to help fine-tune the language be sent to her later. She circulated the survey link via chat. It will be emailed as well.

There was debate over whether any questions should be cut to decrease the length. Calpurnya advocated for keeping questions related to concerns about supporting affordable housing. Neal noted that the questions should invite as wide a response as possible since this part of outreach targets “the broad part of the cone”; to that effect, he asked if it would be possible to present questions/choices in a simpler fashion. Karen suggested having a link at the end to sign up for the Trust mailing list, rather than a field to enter emails, and a question about housing tenure.

Karen added that Calpurnya had gotten Katherine Levine Einstein’s feedback on the survey as well. Trust feedback was to be submitted to Calpurnya by Saturday, as she’ll be away next week. Kelly and Karen have editor privileges to finalize anything in the survey after she leaves.

Before adjourning, Karen went over the timeline for the community engagement phase. A sign-up link for street intercept surveys and facilitation of listening sessions will be circulated to the Trust. Trust members can help promote the online survey/outreach documents among their networks and should also review training materials on the listening sessions that Calpurnya will share. Additionally, Kelly and Karen will work on a Town communications plan for engagement, which contains various components such as an ACMI interview. Once these pieces are created, Kelly asked for help in pushing out the content since Town channels only go so far. Karen added that it would be good to identify organizational contacts in targeted groups for outreach, and noted it was possible they might want to extend the survey deadline depending on response.

Working group meetings will continue at 8:30 a.m. on Thursdays going forward and members can drop in. These meetings will be posted in accordance with Open Meeting Law to allow for members to help brainstorm around the roll-out of community engagement for the Action Plan. Karen and the other members thanked Calpurnya for her work and leadership on the survey and engagement plan in general, and for presenting at Town Meeting yesterday.

*Meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.*

**Upcoming Meetings:** July 14, August 11, September 8, October 13, November 10, December 8